

Request for Grant Proposals

Background

The New Jersey Education to Earnings Data System (NJEEDS) is the State of New Jersey's centralized longitudinal data system and was developed in 2012 through a grant from the U.S. Department of Education. Its core mission is to create a single place where de-identified state education, postsecondary education, employment, and workforce longitudinal data are safely made available to educational and training stakeholders and the public for analysis to improve governance efforts, policymaking, and the performance of educational and workforce initiatives. Four New Jersey agencies contribute data and resources to the data system. They include:

- New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE),
- New Jersey Higher Education Student Assistance Authority (HESAA),
- New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development (NJDOL), and
- New Jersey Office of the Secretary of Higher Education (OSHE).

Since 2017, NJEEDS has been hosted at the John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development at Rutgers University. Over the past two years, the system has enhanced its accessibility to external researchers. To continue to pilot our data access processes and to solicit important research, the data owners have authorized a grant and training program to qualified researchers to conduct research for the benefit of state agencies and educational and workforce programs. The grant program is funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences' Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems Grant (PR/Award #: R372A200035).

Overview

State agencies are interested in understanding the impacts for the recession on the workforce and possible impacts on educational outcomes, particularly as they relate to differential outcomes for different populations. Approved grantees will be awarded \$3,000 for research projects that cover at least one of the following three priority areas:

- **Postsecondary Outcomes:** Comparative analysis of employment outcomes for people that stop out and those that transfer out and continue to obtain a credential.
- **Educational Workforce Projections:** Teacher workforce and workforce projections using existing data from the New Jersey Education to Earnings Data System (which can be used to inform future reports with expanded data).
- **Socio-economic Status (SES) Exploration:** Develop new socio-economic measures in OSHE and NJDOE data given the limited administrative data available.

Eligibility

Researchers must meet the following eligibility requirements to receive this grant:

- Minimum training in research methods and the research process. To meet this requirement, applicants should meet one of the following criteria:
 - Earned a Ph.D. or equivalent degree, OR
 - Be a current student in a graduate degree program and sponsored by a faculty member with a Ph.D. or equivalent, OR
 - Provide documentation of equivalent experience in supervised or independent research.
- Work must be conducted within the United States.
- Researcher must have a sponsoring employer, educational institution, or organization.
- Obtain approval from an Institutional Review Board (note that Rutgers is affiliated with Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative [CITI Program] and has reciprocity with institutions involved with that program).
- Researcher must agree to sign the NJEEDS Non-Disclosure Research Agreement. A sample can be found on the [NJEEDS website](#).

This grant is ideal for postdoctoral researchers or early career academic researchers, though it is open to experienced researchers as well. This grant also may be well suited for doctoral students paired with their faculty advisors, since awardees will receive training provided through an Applied Data Analytics course, which incorporates collaborative learning tasks prior to investigation of individual research questions.

Proposal Detail

Proposals should provide a brief synopsis of the research plan. Proposals are limited to 3 single-spaced pages with 1-inch margins and text no smaller than 11-point Times New Roman. Researchers are encouraged to review the data dictionary presented on the [NJEEDS website](#). The page limit does not apply to the reference list, the researcher's curriculum vita, or qualification statement (if applicable). All proposals should cover the following topics:

- Introduction explicitly describing which priority area above the research will cover
- Research question
- Brief literature review
- Preliminary list of data elements required
- Proposed method
- References (not included in the page limit)
- Curriculum vitae or résumé (not included in the page limit)
- Qualification statement (if applicable - 1-page maximum beyond the page limit)

Per NJEEDS policy, all research questions must include data sources across two or more agencies to be eligible as a research project in the data system. Single-agency projects will be referred to the agency owner for review but are ineligible for the research grant.

Evaluation Criteria

Research projects will be pre-screened to meet the following criteria before undergoing a more in-depth review. The pre-screening criteria include:

- **Priority Area** - The research plan adequately addresses one of the priority areas listed in the call for grant applications. The research proposed is consistent with existing state and federal privacy/confidentiality laws.
- **Multiple Agency Data Use** - The researcher proposed data elements belonging to two or more agencies.
- **Agency Approval** - Agencies grant permission to use their data consistent with the purposes outlined in this grant proposal and have verified the legal authority under the law to conduct the project.

After proposals pass this initial screening, the proposals will be scored based on the following criteria:

Criteria	Points
Literature Review - Researcher provides documented evidence that work is not duplicative of other projects or they provide justification on how this project will contribute to state or national literature.	15
Research Design - The researcher clearly provides a research question, outlines a method consistent with the research question, and provides a justification for the method used to answer the research question. Note that descriptive studies and/or dashboards will be looked upon as favorably as studies using statistical models.	30
Feasibility - The researcher's method is feasible and the data elements they propose are available for use and can be used for the proposed study.	30
Researcher Qualifications - Researcher provides documentation that they meet the eligibility requirements listed in the request for grant proposals.	25
	100

Important Dates and Deadlines

The application is due on **Friday, March 17, 2023 by 5:00 p.m. Eastern.**

Those that are awarded a grant must participate in a mandatory orientation before accessing the data system. In addition, grantees that are unfamiliar with data science tools are invited to attend an Applied Data Analytics course. The first module of the course provides an introduction to R statistical programming and Structured Query Language (SQL). The second component is optional and covers the research design, analysis techniques, data visualizations, and intermediate data science methods. This training is provided for free to those who are awarded a grant (valued at up to \$4,000). The class is scheduled to run from:

Monday, May 29, 2023 to Friday, August 18, 2023

After research is completed, working papers or summaries will be posted on the New Jersey Education to Earnings Data System website (<https://www.njeeds.org>). If researchers will be submitting their papers to journals with publishing restrictions, researchers will need to post an executive summary until their papers are published.

Date	Event
Wednesday, February 15	Release of request for applications
Wednesday, February 15	Submission application available on NJEEDS website
Friday, March 17 @ 5:00 p.m. ET	Applications due on NJEEDS website
Wednesday, April 19	Estimated date that awards will be announced
Monday, May 29, 1:00 to 3:00 p.m.	Mandatory orientation
May 29 to June 16	Applied Data Analytics – R and SQL (three days/week)
June 19 to August 18	Applied Data Analytics Course – Data Analysis (Wednesdays 2-4pm)

Submission Form

[Click here](#) to access the grant application form.